

DECEMBER 1, 2006 ECSE CHILD COUNT DATA COLLECTION CHANGES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. How is the child count reporting for children in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) changing?

Previously, child count for children in ECSE was reported by disability and placement category. Now, the child count will be reported by disability and "educational environment." The new educational environments require districts to collect information about the time children spend in "regular education," regardless of whether or not these services are required by the child's IEP or are paid for by the LEA.

2. What are the new educational environment data categories?

00A1 In the regular early childhood program at least 80% of time
00A2 In the regular early childhood program 40% to 79% of time
00A3 In the regular early childhood program less than 40% of time
00B1 Separate class
00B2 Separate school
00B3 Residential facility
00B4 Home
00B5 Service provider location

Definitions and instructions for determining the appropriate category are available at the following web address <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/DataCoord/EdEnvironments.html>.

3. Why are the ECSE child count reporting categories changing?

The Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) response in OMB Circular #1820-0517 states the following: *"Section 618 of IDEA requires states to report the number and percent of children participating in regular education. It does not exclude children ages 3 through 5 from this reporting requirement. The current categories do not collect data about the extent to which children ages 3 through 5 are participating in regular education. They only collect data about where these children receive their special education services. Therefore, OSEP concluded that the current data collection does not meet the requirements of IDEA and must be changed."*

The revised categories capture more information about the total educational experience of the child, not just the time the child spends receiving special education or the amount of special education services the child receives.

The new categories require states (districts) to collect information about the time children spend participating in educational services that are not paid for by districts. While these data may not be readily available in many states' (districts') data systems, the information should be known through the IEP process in order to deliver services where children are typically located."

4. Do these new categories replace the IDEA placement categories for children in ECSE?

NO. State and federal regulations still require that the child's placement be based upon the IEP and reflect the services that are provided for in the IEP. The IDEA ECSE placement categories have not changed and are listed below. Definitions of the placement categories are included in the State Plan for Special Education, Regulation IV: http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateplan/FY2005/Reg_IV.pdf.

Home
Itinerant Services Outside the Home
Early Childhood Setting
Early Childhood Special Education Setting
Separate School
Part Time EC / Part Time ECSE Setting
Residential Facility

5. Several of the existing ECSE placement categories have the same name as the new educational environment categories. Can we make the assumption that a placement of "Home," "Separate School" or "Residential Facility" equates to the educational environment of the same name?

NO. The placements look at where the child is receiving services, while the educational environments look at the amount of time a child spends in a regular early childhood program. Therefore, while a child may be receiving services in the home, the child may also be attending a regular early childhood program, in which case the placement would be home, but the educational environment would be "In regular early childhood program X% of time."

6. Does the child's placement still have to be documented on the IEP?

YES. The requirements for documenting the IEP team's decision regarding placement on the IEP have not changed.

7. Will the new reporting categories need to be documented on the child's IEP?

NO. The new categories should not be documented on the IEP, as these categories reflect not only the services that are listed in the IEP, but also regular education services that the child is receiving that are not required by the IEP or provided or paid for by the LEA. However, the LEA must have a system for documenting the district's determination of the child's "educational environment" for reporting purposes. A worksheet has been developed that districts may use for documenting the educational environment. The worksheet can be located at the following web address:
<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/DataCoord/EdEnvironments.html>.

8. Will the LEA have to report ECSE placement data to DESE have we have in the past?

At the present time there will only be one required data collection for Federal reporting purposes and that will be the "Educational Environments" data submitted on Screen 11. Districts are encouraged to develop an internal system for monitoring their ECSE placements to ensure that IEP teams are making appropriate decisions regarding the Least Restrictive Environment for ECSE children. ECSE LRE may be monitored as part of reviews, as well as any time that a child complaint or due process hearing request is filed regarding placement decisions.